

# *The Insider*

## *Yakima Valley Office of Emergency Management December 2011 Newsletter*

### **City of Yakima Responds to Aircraft in Trouble**

Emergency plans were tested December 14, 2011 when a Frontier Airlines flight with 150 people on board made an emergency landing at the Yakima Airport. Officials reported smoke coming from the plane. Brenda Cantu the supervisor at SunComm reported everything went well with no injuries reported. Yakima Fire Department Deputy Fire Chief Bob Stewart will be reviewing the response with those in command to identify any issues but reports so far indicate everything went well.

The incident provides a good example of the need to train and exercise for more than the normal flights that arrive and depart from the Yakima Air Terminal. The Yakima Air Terminal responders and mutual aid partners are on a three year training cycle for a catastrophic events at the airport. The cycle is two years of Table Top Exercises with the third year a Full Scale Exercise. 2012 is the third year in the cycle with a Full Scale Exercise scheduled for September. It is important that we all participate.

### **Stakeholders approve initial Emergency Electronic Notification System Guidelines for the County**

The Emergency Response Community in Yakima County is working towards a new Electronic Emergency Notification System. The old system required a phone tree where dispatchers were required to call individuals directly to make the notifications. This type of system in our modern age is unrealistic in the sense that if there is something going on the dispatcher will not have time and it takes a long time. Under the old system it would sometimes take as much as 90 minutes to complete the calls with nothing going on.

The New system will have the dispatcher login to a web site enter the message and send it. The system would be programmed to notify those individuals needing notification via their cell phones, pagers, and e-mail. It will be a great time saver!

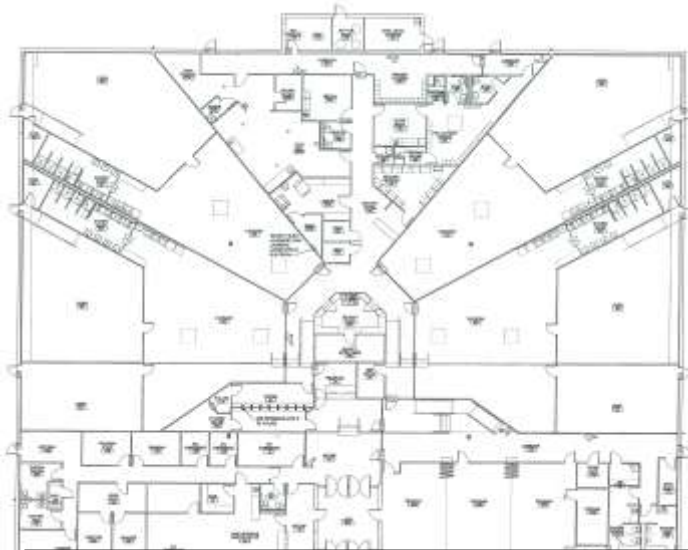
The down sides are people being notified will need to monitor their cell phone, pagers, and e-mail to receive the information. There is always a potential for the

automated system to fail so a redundant system will need to be identified and exercised.

The new system will necessitate an update to Emergency Support Function (ESF) 2 of the Comprehensive Emergency Management Program (CEMP). Charles Erwin is working on the update to insuring the Alert and Warning System is consistent with our plans.

### **Office of Emergency Management Relocating "Again"**

Yakima County Officials have advised Emergency Management's current space is needed for another agency creating space for another agency etc. It's a big project. In the counties unwritten plan Emergency Management would move to the Restitution Center, the old jail in Union Gap. There are several other tenants being lobbied to move to the center as well. Yakima County 911 consolidating dispatch centers, Emergency Medical Service, and Washington State Cooperative



*Current floor plan for the Restitution Center in Union Gap. The back portion interior walls 19,000 sq Ft of the building would be demolished and rebuilt*

Extension are looking at the counties proposal. Yakima County Department of Corrections would remain in a portion of the building.

The plan for the Restitution Center is to demolish about 19,000 sq ft of the interior walls and reconstruct office space needed for the tenants. Demolition of the interior walls is expected early next year. With design and construction to follow.

Because Emergency Management relocated from the basement of the courthouse to its current location in Suite 110 18 months ago, and paying a large portion of the renovation costs Yakima County has agreed verbally to pay for the renovation and the move. Emergency Management has developed a relocation white paper and provided it to county officials outlining the offices needs.

While there are downsides to moving again after the many hour of work, by volunteers and staff, that has gone into the current location there are benefits. Co-locating with 911 and dispatch, EMS, and WSU Coop Extension are many. There is also potential of shared space that can make it cost affective.

## **Emergency Management Looses Staff Member**

Helga Staffan a six year veteran of the office will be laid off December 31, 2011 due to budget cuts. Helga a part time employee has been a valuable member of the team taking care of many of the items and issues that make the office run smoothly in a crisis. She has contacted nearly every official in the valley at one point or another tracking down or updating their contact information. Jim Hall said she will be missed by the other staff members and himself. Thanks Helga for a job well done!

## **Jim Hall Elected to State Emergency Management Association Office**

Jim Hall Director of the local office has been elected to the President Elect Position for the Washington State Emergency Management Association. He will serve on the board of directors for a year as President Elect and take office in September of 2012.

## **Reporting and Documentation System being developed for the OAEOC**

One of the major functions of Emergency Management during a major event or disaster is reporting situational awareness and damage assessment. When a major emergency or disaster occurs local, state and federal officials begin asking what is going on, what do you need, etc? To facilitate this Emergency Management seeks out and documents situational information about what is happening from the involved responders and the affected citizens. This information is then summarized and a Situation Report is developed for distribution.

Another very import piece is documenting damage to Private Residents, Businesses, and Government facilities roads bridges etc. During or shortly after an event the state and federal government requires an initial Damage Assessment be completed identifying dollar values for the damage that has occurred. The values and number of damaged properties are then used to determine eligibility for potential multiple federal funding sources to assist in the recovery effort.

The system an access database will allow multiple users to document reported information in a single location. Build reports from that information for distribution. Jim Hall the system developer says it will not be used very often but when an event occurs it will save time and produce viewable information reports quickly. If used as intended in the aftermath of an event many of the final reports will be available at the push of a button.

## **Exercises and Training Completed**

### **Emergency Management Staff has begun an internal bi-weekly training program for the office.**

The training usually lasts about 2 hours on every other Friday Morning. Topics include the Job Aids how to use them etc., OAEOC Audio Visual Equipment, the Electronic Notification System, WebEOC, etc.

## **Future Exercises and Training**

**City of Yakima Advanced Emergency Operations Center** Late January-Early February 2012  
First Planning Meeting Set. Advanced Table  
Top Exercise

**City of Union Gap Active Shooter Full Scale Exercise** February - 2012  
Tentative, To be developed. Advanced Table  
Top Exercise No progress at this point.

## **Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year**

### **Your Dedicated Emergency Management Staff**



OEM Staff from Left to Right

Charles Erwin  
Jim Hall  
Helga Staffan  
Lisa Truhlicka  
KR Catlin

Senior Program Analyst  
Director  
Homeland Security Planner  
Administrative Assistant  
Homeland Security